

Success Story

Alfredo Von Samek, President **Chicago Architectural Metals** **Chicago, Illinois**

Chicago Architectural Metals opened for business in 1997, founded by Alfredo Von Samek, a former Lieutenant in the US Army and Special Agent for the FBI. After completing his civil career, Alfredo worked in the international importing and exporting of metals as well as in metal fabrication and erection. It was this experience that led to his entrepreneurial adventure, a boutique firm that specializes in custom ornamental iron, structural steel and architectural metals. From the start the SBA was there to help providing sound business experience and knowledgeable guidance.

In the beginning the jobs were small and not particularly glamorous— lockers, wrought iron fence repairs and the like. However, within a year, by building on these modest projects, and consistently providing good customer service, quality craftsmanship and value, it wasn't long before the firm began to grow in size, projects, scope and numbers.

In 1998, after graduating from the University of Michigan, Jonathan Von Samek, the eldest of Alfred's sons came to work for his father with a strong interest in the business side of the operation. Joining his father in estimating, and field work, Jonathan spent a number of years as a Project Manager before being promoted to Vice President of Chicago Architectural Metals where he now oversees many of the company's largest projects, most recently those include the Wrigley Global Innovation Center and The University of Illinois at Chicago's Gateway Plaza and Skyspace, where renowned artist James Turrell created a portal to the University and Chicago Architectural Metals provided the architectural metals and structural steel.

Though the company has stayed at a manageable size, this hasn't been a limiting factor when considering projects – with work ranging from custom balcony railings to one of a kind sculptural residential and commercial staircases, to large scale projects such as the renovation of one of Chicago's most visible train stations at Millennium Park, Chicago Architectural Metals has fulfilled its mission to become a one-stop shop for all metal fabrication and erecting needs.

Today, the company that was founded in 1997 has continued its consistent growth average of 20-25% annually, and is ever increasing the scope of work provided and the geographic regions served.

At the forefront of construction technology, some of CAM's other projects have included custom work for Walt Disney's Soaring Project in Orlando Florida, curtain wall for Helmut Jahn's architecturally significant IIT State Street building, repair work on Chicago's landmark Navy Pier Ferris Wheel and elegant restoration work for the famed Drake Hotel and the Historic Riverside Water Tower, a structure designated as an American Water Landmark in 1972.

These examples point to the scope of CAM's innovative work and emphasis on quality in construction and architectural/ornamental metals.

While hard work, experience and perseverance played a large part in the success of Chicago Architectural Metals, a key guiding element from the start, and along the way, has been the SBA business development specialists, according to Alfredo Von Samek, President of CAM. "The SBA served to mentor our company, guiding our staff through the comprehensive application/certification process, providing programs and opportunities for networking and business development." It is with continued support from the SBA that CAM plans to continue their growth and meet ever-expanding business goals in the upcoming year.

Chicago Architectural Metals, Inc is a veteran owned, U.S. Small Business Administration "SBA" 8a certified company. With over thirty years experience in the metals industry, Chicago Architectural Metals "CAM" has direct mill sources, offering customers value engineering with on schedule delivery. To find out more about Chicago Architectural Metals, please visit them at www.chicagoarchitecturalmetals.com.